

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-05 SS-15 SSO-00 SP-02
NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 L-03 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7354

INFO SECDEF WASHDC//ISA/DSAA IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1741

THIS IS A JOINT DEFENSE/STATE MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS LE

SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL KHOURY

REF: AMEMB BEIRUT 1713 (DTG 291354Z MAR 78)

1. SUMMARY. DATT HAD CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL KHOURY ON 29 MARCH FOLLOWING KHOURY'S 28 MARCH MEETING WITH GENERAL ERSKINE. KHOURY EXPRESSED HIS EQUIPMENT CONCERNS FOR BOTH THE BRIGADE TO SOUTH AND THE FORCES LEFT IN EXISTING BARRACKS (REPORTED BEIRUT 1713). HE SAID HIS CONCEPT FOR DEPLOYING TO THE SOUTH HAD CHANGED AND THAT HE WOULD JOIN UNIFIL FORCES ALONG THE LITANI. HE SAID HE WOULD SEND AN OFFICER TO THE UN HQ AT NAQURAH. HE HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH MAJ HADDAD ABOUT HADDAD'S MILITARY PROGRAM IN THE SOUTH. MAJOR JOHNNY ABDO, LAF G-2, WAS PRESENT DURING DISCUSSION.

2. EQUIPMENT CONCERNS. KHOURY CONSIDERS THE MAINTENANCE OF A
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FORCE IN BEIRUT AREA AS WELL AS MT LEBANON AND TRIPOLI IMPORTANT TO COUNTER POSSIBLE PALESTINIAN THREAT AFTER DEPLOYMENT OF BRIGADE SOUTH. HIS 28 MARCH GENERAL MOBILIZATION ORDER FOR ALL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE ARMY TO RETURN TO THEIR POSTS IS AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE ARMY IN PREPARATION FOR POSSIBLE CONFLICT RESULTING FROM DEPLOYMENT. AFTER THE LAF DEPLOYS SOUTH, BOTH KHOURY AND ABDO FEEL PALESTINIANS WILL INITIATE INCIDENTS

THERE WITH LAF AND SOME FIGHTING WILL INEVITABLY RESULT.

3. CONCEPT FOR DEPLOYMENT. KHOURY SAID THAT AFTER 28 MARCH DISCUSSIONS WITH ERSKINE HE CONVINCED UNIFIL UNABLE TO EFFECTIVELY CONTROL PALESTINIANS AND THEREFORE WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO ASSIST GOL RESTORING ITS AUTHORITY IN SOUTH WITHOUT LAF PRESENCE. HE SAID THAT UNIFIL WAS BOTH POLITICALLY AND MILITARILY MORE SUITED TO OPERATE ALONG ISRAELI BORDER THAN LAF. HE SAW INITIAL DEPLOYMENT OF LAF TO AREA ALONG LITANI NEAR UNIFIL POSITIONS WHICH COULD THEN FREE UNIFIL TO MOVE SOUTH AFTER TURNING OVER LITANI POSITIONS TO LEBANESE. PRIMARY ROUTE ENVISIONED WAS TO BE THROUGH BEKAA WITH ALTERNATE THROUGH THE UPPER SHUF TO JAZZIN, AYSHIYAH ETC. SEA MOVEMENT TO NAQURAH WAS CONSIDERED TO BE OUTSIDE CHOICE, BUT USEFUL FOR RESUPPLY OF FORCE ONCE ESTABLISHED IN SOUTH. ABDO JOINED IN BY SAYING SENDING LAF TO SOUTH BANK OF LITANI IS THE ONLY WAY THAT LEBANESE AUTHORITY COULD BE ESTABLISHED, AND HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT GENERAL ERSKINE WAS UNAWARE OF COMPLICATED PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN DEALING WITH PALESTINIANS. HE POINTED OUT UNIFIL'S PROBLEMS IN CONTROLLING TYRE AND ARAFAT'S FAILURE TO AGREE TO CEASEFIRE AS EXAMPLES. DATT ASKED WHAT LEBANESE FORCE WOULD BE DEPLOYED TO BORDER AREA OF SOUTH AND KHOURY REPLIED 200 GENDARMERIE. LATER ABDO PRIVATELY MENTIONED THAT LAF CONCERNED ABOUT LONG TERM IDF PRESENCE ALONG BORDER AND PROBLEM OF LOCAL MILITIAS AND INDICATED THAT THESE WOULD BE LESS OF A PROBLEM FOR UNIFIL THAN FOR LEBANESE ARMY.

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4. OFFICER TO NAQURAH. KHOURY SAID HE AGREED WITH ERSKINE'S REQUEST TO SEND LAF LIAISON OFFICER TO NAQURAH IF UN MADE FORMAL REQUEST. HE SAID ERSKINE DISAPPOINTED THAT ONLY A MAJOR WAS BEING CONSIDERED, BUT KHOURY HAD EXPLAINED TO ERSKINE THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY OFFICER PROMOTIONS FOR FOUR YEARS AND HE WAS SENDING A SENIOR MAJOR SPECIALLY SELECTED FOR HIS EXPERIENCE AND MATURITY WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO ADEQUATELY PERFORM THE ASSIGNMENT. KHOURY SAID OFFICER SHOULD BE AT NAQURAH ON 30 MARCH. KHOURY MENTIONED THAT HE KNEW IDF COS GUR WANTED TO MEET WITH HIM, BUT KHOURY CONSIDERED SUCH MEETING QUOTE PREMATURE UNQUOTE.

5. MAJ HADDAD. KHOURY SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HADDAD ABOUT HIS FORMING A CHRISTIAN-SHIA ARMY IN THE SOUTH AND TOLD HIM TO STOP. WE CAN CUT OFF HIS PAY, SAID KHOURY, AND ABDO EXPLAINED THAT EVEN THOUGH ISRAELIS PROVIDE EQUIPMENT, THEY DON'T PROVIDE MONEY. KHOURY SEEMED SATISFIED THAT HADDAD'S RECRUITING CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN SQUELCHED.

PARKER

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